

# **School / Community Links In Environmental Education**

**A Review of the factors of success  
in the Chongololo Clubs of Zambia**



School / Community Links

# **In Environmental Education**

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**Bruce Downie  
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# **Executive Summary**

**Zambia's Chongololo Clubs have been operating in elementary schools across the country for over twenty-five years. They represent a program of environmental education that has stood the test of time and has continued to be an important force in reaching out to young people with a message of environmental conservation. They have also had a positive effect on community awareness of conservation concerns.**

**The intent of this review was to determine which features of the program were critical to its success, so that new initiatives for environmental education could be mounted in other African countries with the insight gained from the Zambian experience.**

**In order to determine the major factors contributing to the program's success, a school review was conducted in selected regions of Zambia: Mfuwe, representing an area associated with a major national park; Choma, representing a rural area focused on agriculture; Kitwe, representing the industrial centres of the Copperbelt; and Lusaka, representing a major urban area. Within each region a number of schools were identified, and interviews were conducted with club patrons, students and members of the community.**

**The interviews addressed the logistical aspects of the program, its structure, membership, activities, difficulties, directions, and links with, and impact on, local communities. They also investigated the participants' understanding of the environment and environmental issues. It was on the basis of these interviews that the consultants reached conclusions regarding the program's operation and the factors most significant to its success.**

**On the basis of the data gathered, nine factors were identified as important attributes of the Chongololo program. They are: (1) the widespread recognition and profile of the program within the school system; (2) the targeting of young people as the primary audience; (3) the creation of long lasting impressions through significant events or activities; (4) an ongoing process of inservice training and leadership development; (5) the development and dissemination of information and student resources; (6) the development and delivery of complementary programs through other media such as radio; (7) the development of direct contacts with community members to increase general environmental awareness; (8) the reinforcement of learning through application in practical, tangible contributions; and (9) the development of links with related community organizations.**

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

Zambia's Chongololo Clubs were established in the early 1970's as part of a public education effort aimed at changing the attitude of community resistance to the establishment and development of national parks. The ecological focus of the program stemmed from the increasing problem of poaching in areas around the parks. Local hunting practices were seen as responsible for species depletion.

The National Parks Department was a major partner in the establishment of the CC program. The Department had initiated training programs for scouts and communities in response to the poaching issue, and in the schools they joined with the Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia (WECSZ) to bring funding and expertise to the establishment of the CC program.

Other efforts were operating simultaneously. For example, the Lupande Rural Development project was initiated in the late 1960's, promoting agricultural activities as an alternative to traditional hunting. Eventually, the National Parks Department began to focus its efforts on the community conservation initiative and broke away from the CC program.

The CC has always maintained a strong emphasis on the wildlife values of national parks. As nature study clubs, they have focussed on wildlife—knowing the wildlife of Zambia and recognizing the importance of its protection. Materials such as monthly magazines for students, as well as teacher support guides, were developed around these themes. The target audience was the upper elementary school level—Grades 4 - 7.

A number of years after the club's initial establishment, a new dimension was introduced. A radio program was developed for weekly broadcast. As a complement to the magazine materials, it too targeted upper primary school students, but its medium enabled it to reach an even wider audience.

In the mid 1980's the WECSZ undertook a review of the Chongololo initiative to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The major concern which arose from the review was the gap left by the program after elementary school. Students had no follow-up program to maintain their interest in secondary school. In response to this need, a similar network of Conservation Clubs was formed in secondary schools throughout the country.

While Chongololo Clubs are widespread, it is difficult to know exactly how many are active. Clubs are required to register their affiliation with the WECSZ annually, so that it is possible to send out materials; however, communications are difficult and the current club list is inevitably inaccurate.

## **1.2 The Project**

The intent of the current review is to identify the characteristics of the CC program that have made it such a success, particularly in terms of the links established between school based programs and community initiatives in environmental conservation. In holding this program up

as an example of a successful environmental education initiative, the hope is that other African countries will be able to address similar issues within their own systems. The review is intended to provide some indications of how to develop an environmental education program.

This project is supported by the Education Office of the Africa Bureau of UNSAID, as part of the GreenCom project. The Zambia Study Coordinator, Bruce Downie, was assisted in the review by an In-country Coordinator, Shadreck Nsongela. Together they developed an approach to the review and implemented it within the framework provided by GreenCom. Mr. Brad Strickland, of UNSAID, played a key advisory role in the approach to the study, and he participated in the initial field design and data gathering.

The Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia sponsors the CC's of Zambia. The Society's interest and involvement in the review was critical to its success. Members of staff and the Executive Committee contributed information, opinions and insights concerning the program's history and operation. While enthusiastic regarding the importance and success of the CC's, they were also candid about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Individual staff members in various regions of the country assisted the consultants in identifying and contacting schools and provided logistical support for the review process.

Naturally, during the course of the review it was possible to identify areas where the program would benefit from new or strengthened activity, or from the application of increased resources. Attention to these needs was of particular importance to the WECSZ and their partners, who want to expand the program and increase its impact in communities throughout the country.



## **2. Project Design**

### **2.1 Regions**

While the Chongololo Club program originally focused on national park areas, the program has expanded to a nation-wide initiative with a broadly based interest in raising young people's awareness of the natural environment. For the purposes of this review, it was considered important to sample schools with widely varying environmental contexts. To this end, schools were selected from three different regions of Zambia. The Mfuwe area was chosen as an area with a strong wildlife and tourism focus, adjacent to South Luangwa National Park (SLNP). Another rural area, Choma, was selected for its strong relationship to agricultural production. The third area selected was Lusaka, as representative of the urban context.

In the initial design and consultation phase in Lusaka, representatives of the WECSZ expressed a strong interest in having their relatively active environmental education program in Kitwe included in the study. While time and resources for the study were already fixed and limited, the consultants made an effort to initiate some contact in this region of the country. Kitwe is the major city of the Copperbelt of Northern Province and reflects an urban setting based on mining. It thus provided an interesting complement to the three study areas originally identified.

#### **Mfuwe**

The Mfuwe area is a dispersed agglomeration of villages adjacent to the SLNP and within the Lupande Game Management Area (GMA). The SLNP is one of Zambia's premier wildlife areas, with a significant tourism industry. Major infrastructure development in the early 1970's has facilitated tourist access, with an airport, a 20 km tar road from the airport to the park boundary, a bridge over the Luangwa River, and all weather roads into the park. A number of tourist lodges have been established over the past 30 years, and hunting concessions operate in the GMA.

The Mfuwe area was one of the original target areas for the establishment of the Chongololo Club program because of its connection with the SLNP. As a result, CC's have a long history in the area and benefit from considerable support. Many of the tourist lodges have become actively involved in local community development, particularly through school sponsorship. The lodges have been keen to encourage conservation education and have provided knowledgeable support to the Chongololo Clubs, as well as offering access to the park for local students.

The Mfuwe area is quite remote with very poor roads and limited access from Chipata, 130 km to the east. Schools are widely dispersed, and many are very poorly supplied, have difficulty attracting and maintaining teachers, and experience very difficult communications.

A donor sponsored project, the Luangwa Integrated Resource Development Project (LIRDP), has been operating in the valley for many years. It supports national park development and operation, as well as broader community development. Related to this study project, the LIRDP has recently initiated a significant public conservation education effort throughout the area, including some support for the Chongololo Club program.

## **Choma**

Choma is a regional service centre in Southern Province, along the main highway between Lusaka and Livingstone. Its location provides links to both the Zambezi (Lake Kariba) to the southeast and to Kafuwe National Park to the northwest, although the distance to either makes the links tenuous at best for most residents of the area. Choma has developed as a service centre for agricultural enterprises primarily engaged in the production of tobacco and beef. A number of large commercial farms surround the city, along with some smaller local enterprises.

In addition to the dominant agricultural industry, government and private sector interests have focused on forestry. A government forestry research centre and a major forest reserve north of the city reflect the concern for deforestation and the value of maintaining significant areas of natural and productive forest. A few game ranches have also developed in the area, largely in conjunction with other farming activities.

Another aspect of the context for this review in the Choma area is the presence of the Choma Environmental Conservation Centre (CECC). This is a NGO officially formed in 1992 to undertake community education in environmental conservation. In 1994 the organization turned its attention to agro-forestry/reforestation with the initial support of UNDP, working with women's groups, teachers and community leaders.

## **Kitwe**

Kitwe is the largest urban centre in the Copperbelt, a major mining area of Northern Province. The copper mines in this region are a long standing economic foundation for the country. Currently, extremely low copper prices on the international market have reduced the contribution of the industry to the foreign exchange income of the country. In addition, following a nation-wide effort to privatize industries which were formerly owned and operated by the state, the mines have been put up for sale. This has placed a burden on the communities during a difficult period of transition when employment is insecure and economic viability is uncertain.

As a result of the history of the area, Kitwe has grown as a service centre for the mining operations of the region and provides all the urban functions in support of this major industrial enterprise.

## **Lusaka**

The capital city, Lusaka, is by far the largest and most diversified urban centre in Zambia. It exhibits all the characteristics—both amenities and problems—typical of cities of its size in southern Africa. It is the centre for national activities in all sectors, especially government, and is the focal point for transportation, communications, and finance within the country.

Typically, unemployment is high and living conditions are poor, especially in the suburbs. Maintaining residential services is difficult, given the city's limited resources and the growing population.

## **2.2 Contacts**

Within the constraints of time and resources, efforts were made to expand as fully as

possible the breadth of this inquiry into Zambian environmental education programs. Four different sectors were identified as offering potentially different perspectives based on the nature of their involvement with the program. The four sectors are: (1) the providers of the program (i.e. the WECSZ); (2) teachers and administrators of schools providing the club activity; (3) students participating in the club; and (4) community members connected with schools where clubs are active. It was considered important to explore all these perspectives in order to gain a comprehensive view of the program and its strengths.

In addition, a sense of the broader context of environmental education was gained through contacts with a variety of related organizations and individuals working at a regional or national level. Organizations such as the Ministry of Education, the National Parks Department, the Department of Forestry, the Choma Environmental Conservation Centre and the Luangwa Integrated Resource Development Project were contacted in order to determine what efforts were being made within their programs to address community environmental education and what links they maintained with the CC program.

## **2.3 Interviews**

The review was conducted through interviews with representatives from each of the four sectors described above. The general approach to each interview focused on four topic areas: structure and administration of the CC program; perceptions of the environment and issues and solutions in local areas; links between community and school programs; and strengths and difficulties of local CC's.

A number of factors influenced the implementation and effectiveness of the interviews. In the first place, the breadth of the interview meant that considerable time was needed to address the wide range of relevant topics. Combined with this was the need to explain the nature of the review and develop some level of understanding and rapport with the people being interviewed. The approach by such obvious outsiders at times made communications restrained and difficult, especially where there was a feeling of inadequacy with respect to the questions being asked, or a lack of familiarity with the language and concepts of environmental education. A great deal of flexibility was needed to move with the direction of the conversation and build on topics of interest to the participants. These factors resulted in relatively long interviews in which it was often necessary to be selective about the topic areas that could be addressed. The interviews tended to be about an hour in length, and although within that time some aspects may not have been covered, to go beyond this length was felt to be less productive.

Although, ideally, individual interviews may have provided a more precise measure of the understanding of environmental conservation and the response to the CC program, this approach was not always feasible, for three reasons. First, it was necessary to be sensitive to the interests of the participants. Typically, they wished to involve as many people as possible in the process of the review. This was particularly true for the student groups, but also for teachers and administrators connected to the program. The consultants' visits were seen as opportunities to encourage and support the CC program, and involving as many people as possible was considered the most effective way of achieving that. While the consultants indicated an interest in keeping numbers manageable (i.e. student groups of 12 - 15), that was not always responded to. In the end the consultants accommodated whatever approach was taken by the school leaders.

A second reason for moving away from individual interviews involved the comfort level of

the participants. There was obvious discomfort at being questioned by outsiders concerning a topic which was not necessarily an area of strength. By allowing other individuals to participate in the interview the pressure of individual performance was diminished, and people were able to contribute more freely. This was most noticeable among the students but was a factor among community members as well. Where community members did not have the benefit of being a part of a group, the interviews were often difficult and progress with many concepts was very slow. It should be noted that community contacts varied according to the circumstance. In village areas, small groups of adults from the village of one of the student club members were interviewed as a group. In urban settings, the consultants accompanied a small number of students from the club back to their homes and interviewed the parent(s) in each household separately.

A third reason for moving away from individual interviews was that the review was intended to focus primarily on input and ideas on the CC program and its effectiveness in community links, rather than on a strict evaluation of individual understanding of concepts and issues. The reviewers wanted to know why the CC program was a success, and a wide sampling of opinions on the question was preferred to a more structured measuring of success indicators. A study based on success indicators may have been useful if it could have been accurately designed, but it was not possible within the time and budget constraints imposed by the current review.

As a result of the considerations noted above, the interviews took place with groups of widely varying sizes. Teacher/administrator groups ranged in size from 1-8; student groups ranged from 12 - 80; and community representative groups ranged from 1 - 20. As one might expect, even in large groups the number of individuals who actively participated throughout the discussion was actually quite small.

## **2.4 Sampling**

Two issues with respect to sampling quickly became evident in the field. Time was a factor, because the length of interviews reduced the number of interviews possible, and because the remoteness of the schools restricted the number of groups which could be visited within a given time period. In addition, the protocols for visiting the schools, and the lead time necessary to make arrangements for the interviews, varied from location to location. This often necessitated two visits to the same school.

The second sampling issue concerned the difficulty of conducting parallel interviews in schools where clubs were in existence and in schools where they were not. The consultants held meetings with teachers in schools where no clubs existed but it was felt to be unduly intrusive on the school program to conduct extensive interviews where there was no prior commitment to the program. It was felt that such an approach required different protocol arrangements with the school district, including advance warning of the schools. Such a procedure seemed impractical given the time constraints of the study.

It should be noted that throughout the areas surveyed, it was difficult to contact individuals to make arrangements for meetings. None of the schools visited had telephones. This meant that the consultants either met with teachers or administrators on one day and returned to the school another day, or the school responded spontaneously to the requests and accommodated the full program. In schools where there were clubs, there was enthusiasm to accommodate us. Much greater resistance was evident in schools that did not already have a Chongololo program.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 Mfuwe**

#### **Schools**

Seven schools were contacted during two separate visits to the area. The schools were selected in two ways. The first was as a result of their links with tourist lodges in the area. Many of the tourist lodges in the Mfuwe area have developed sponsorship links with local schools as a way of extending benefits into the community. These links are helpful to the schools, which benefit from financial support provided by the lodges and their clients for school improvement projects. The links also benefit the lodges by providing the opportunity for additional visitor activities and by demonstrating the flow of direct benefits from tourist activity to the communities. Three of the schools visited have long-standing direct links with major lodge operations in the area. Understandably, the three schools very close to the park were those with direct links to the tourist operators. The remaining four schools contacted were further from the park and had no such links.

The second means of selecting schools was on the basis of recommendations from community liaison officers with the LIRD. The Public Relations, Education and Information Section provides support to school based conservation programs in the area through direct visits. They were asked to identify schools where clubs could be contacted for the purposes of this review.

In each of the schools contacted, the club patron and/or head teacher was interviewed. In five of the schools, students were interviewed. In three of the schools, community links were also made and interviews were conducted.

#### **Club Meetings**

The student membership in CC's generally reflected the expected grade levels targeted by the WECSZ. In a few instances younger students (Grs. 1- 3) were included in the club, and in other situations students in Grs. 8 & 9 were also participating. Membership was open to all, but conflicts with other clubs and logistical considerations such as the distance to school, affected the actual numbers of students participating. Numbers ranged from 12 to 35 regular members.

Club meeting times were standardized in conjunction with other club activities in the school. One afternoon a week was typical, although some additional times were reported for special activities and on-going project responsibilities. Activities such as tending tree planting areas often involved the students on an almost daily basis. On the other hand, it is probable that in spite of the designated weekly schedule, some clubs did not meet as regularly as indicated.

There was little connection made with the Chongololo Club Of the Air. Very few people appear to listen regularly or even intermittently. Little access to radios and a weak signal seem to be significant factors in this, although some individuals reported listening to the program.

#### **Students**

The student interviews in this study area were very encouraging. Students were generally very knowledgeable and forthcoming. They demonstrated a good understanding of the links between various environmental factors (e.g. the link between tree cutting and erosion during floods), as well as a good knowledge of the impacts on the community of environmental changes (e.g. the effects of wildlife depletion on tourism revenue). They were similarly able to translate this knowledge into a good appreciation of future implications for both themselves and their community.

Enthusiasm was evident in the majority of the interviews, and strong personal connections to wildlife in particular were expressed. Beyond the wildlife issues, there was generally considerable interest in the club and its broad conservation focus.

Students also expressed a relatively strong connection to family and village. This context of small, closely linked communities seemed to be a factor in the students' common statement that their role in response to environmental problems and challenges was to tell or teach others rather than to become directly involved themselves. Perhaps, too, their recognition of the complex interrelationship of environmental factors contributed to the perception that solutions would require a cooperative effort on the part of a wide variety of people. There was little evidence from the student responses that parents were distant from, or disagreed with, the environmental conservation focus of the club—an attitude described by the patrons, in contrast, as being common within the communities. The children were perhaps reluctant to express this information, or else the opposition comes from parts of the community beyond the students' immediate family.

## **Patrons**

The patrons in schools with established clubs were generally very aware of the environmental issues and needs of their area and the role of the club and its activities in promoting long term solutions. They were typically highly motivated and had a long-standing personal connection to conservation, as many had participated in CC's during their own elementary school education. They also demonstrated good sensitivity and connection to community issues and concerns.

At the same time, they were very aware of their inadequacies with respect to the potential of the club and its activity. They felt a need for instruction and support that would enhance their leadership capabilities. They recognized the critical need to motivate students and were actively seeking the means of achieving the best effort and participation from students.

There was considerable variation in the support from other organizations solicited by club patrons. Some patrons and administrators described active links with very positive results. Typically, the less experienced teachers had weaker community links.

## **Club Activities**

Clubs in the Mfuwe area appeared to be very active. One consistent trend among the clubs was dramatic activity, and one school presented the consultants with a very effective production concerning wildlife conservation. Game drives were also mentioned frequently as activities which were a highly effective stimulus to student involvement in, and commitment to, the program. Not all clubs had the benefit of this experience, which tended to come with

sponsorship from one of the local lodges.

Tree planting was a common activity aimed at improving school yard aesthetics, developing individual skills and responsibility, or earning income for the club. In addition, some clubs reported field studies focusing on a variety of local plant and animal species and communities. These studies varied in intensity from school yard explorations to long-term projects and reports on trips to adjacent park areas.

### **Desirable Club Activities**

Most clubs indicated a strong desire to increase or improve activities that were already underway. Game drives, for example, were seen as a very important activity and one whose full potential had not been realized. More frequent drives would allow more students to participate and would enable more in-depth study of the animals. Clubs suggested video filming of such outings as another way of extending the experience as widely as possible throughout the school. Field studies were also identified as an activity which could be developed further.

Frequently, one of the top priorities for new activities was forming links with other clubs. Such links could be based on information exchange and/or competitions, along with social activities. Other new projects such as fish ponds or aquariums were identified, and it was recognized that in such ventures advice from experts would be valuable.

### **Difficulties**

Patrons identified the lack of teacher support and training as the dominant obstacle to club success. This commonly expressed problem was reflected again in a desire for greater interclub connections through the sharing of information and activities. Patrons typically felt isolated and welcomed opportunities to gain some perspective on their own efforts and to receive some direction and advice.

The need for more written materials was the second major concern among patrons, who were acutely aware that their knowledge and experience was limited. For students, this lack of resources was the most obvious difficulty limiting their ability to gain knowledge and explore issues. Both students and patrons also identified a lack of audio/visual materials. There was a strong sense that such materials could add to the learning experience of the club members, offer incentives to club participation, and provide added benefits to the larger school population.

Finally, transportation was recognized as a factor limiting club activities such as game drives in the park and interaction with other clubs in the area.

### **Community**

Community members indicated strong interest and opinions regarding CC's but offered widely diverse viewpoints. On the one hand, some strongly supported the activities of the club and saw potential for it to be more involved in community activities. On the other hand, there was a significant level of opposition to the views and attitudes associated with the CC and some reluctance on the part of community members to embrace the school's effort. This was seen as a challenge by some clubs and as a reason for a lack of development in the club program.

Regardless of the community participants' perspective on the clubs, issues around wildlife

and agriculture dominated their view of the environment, reflecting the primary concerns of survival and food security. Many individuals participated in village action groups (VAG)--structures established to work towards greater community benefits from the effective utilization of natural resources. The groups are the result of the work of the LIRD and signify a move towards local involvement in decision-making and the allocation of collective revenues. Most club supporters in the communities saw the two efforts (VAG's and CC's) working together to educate people and change attitudes towards environmental issues.

## **3.2 Choma**

### **Contacts**

The WECSZ directed the consultants to Mrs. Choongo, an active Society Coordinator in the Choma area. Mrs. Choongo scheduled all the school meetings in the Choma area during the first visit, accompanying the review team during the investigations. For the second visit, she was joined by Mr. Smart Dzikamunenga of the Choma Environmental Conservation Centre. With his knowledge of women's conservation groups in the communities and CC's in the rural schools, he was helpful in identifying appropriate schools to visit.

Ten schools were contacted during two separate visits to the area. In each of the schools contacted, the club patron and/or head teacher was interviewed. Of the ten schools, seven had established CC's, and in six of the seven schools with clubs, students were interviewed. In five of the schools, community links were also made and interviews conducted.

Two contacts in the wider community were significant to the data gathering in the Choma area. Mr. Smart Dzikamunenga, in his role as the Coordinator of the Choma Environmental Conservation Centre, provided insight into a major effort of the Centre to establish and support women's conservation groups in the rural communities. Also, Mr. Bruce Miller Sr. (deceased September 1998), a local farmer and game rancher, and a long time member and former president of the WECSZ, was interviewed about his perspective on the environmental education activities of the area.

### **Club Meetings**

Student membership in CC's varied somewhat from the expected grade levels targeted by the WECSZ. Some clubs extended the normal age range by including younger students (Grs. 1-3). In one instance a junior club had actually developed focusing on this age range. In other situations, the pattern was more restrictive, limiting the club to members from Grs. 6 and 7. Within the grade parameters membership was open to all, but conflicts with other clubs and logistical considerations, such as the distance to school, affected the actual numbers of students participating. There was also some indication that the national office had expectations concerning group size. In one case this was reflected in a membership fee and a membership limit, while in another situation a fee was discussed but was not strictly applied. Numbers ranged from approximately 20 to 50 regular members.

Club meeting times were typically standardized in conjunction with other club activities in the school. One afternoon a week was typical although some additional times were reported for special activities. On-going project responsibilities, such as tending tree planting areas, often involved the students on an almost daily basis. On the other hand, it was assumed that in spite of



the designated once a week schedule, some clubs did not meet as regularly as indicated.

There was little familiarity with the CCOA. Very few people listened either regularly or even intermittently. Limited access to radios and the weakness of the signal were significant factors in this, although some individuals reported listening to the program.

## **Students**

The student interviews in this study area seemed to reflect a considerable difference between town and rural schools; however, the relative expedience of the patrons may be of more significance than location in explaining this discrepancy.

Students in the town schools were generally knowledgeable and forthcoming. They demonstrated a good understanding of the links between environmental factors (e.g. the link between water pollution and disease), as well as a knowledge of local environmental issues (e.g. forest depletion and impacts of agricultural production). They were enthusiastic and demonstrated a significant understanding of environmental concerns beyond their own local area (e.g. wildlife issues), perhaps as a result of exposure to other areas through club trips.

Students in the rural schools of the area demonstrated a much less broad knowledge base and a limited ability to relate to issues and environmental relationships important in areas beyond their immediate surroundings.

Links with the family and community were not particularly strong in this region, for different reasons in town and rural settings. In the town schools, students indicated that they talked with their parents about the club, and parents for the most part supported this perception. However, the conversation seemed to address time commitments and financial support for participation, rather than learning content. Parents here were typically working in a variety of job settings which took them away from a direct relationship with the environment. In rural areas, where parents maintained this direct relationship with the environment, the weakness of the connection between club and community likely reflected the students' own limited environmental awareness and experience.

## **Patrons**

The patrons in the three schools in Choma itself were exceptional. They were aware of both local and national environmental issues, were highly sensitive to the capabilities, interests and motivational needs of their students, were pragmatic in their approach to projects and activities and innovative and flexible in their educational techniques. They were personally motivated by a strong commitment to conservation and had a firm belief in the importance of the club and its activities in effecting long term solutions. One patron had participated in a CC in his own elementary school, while another had been selected and supported by the WECSZ for environmental education training outside the country. They all demonstrated a good understanding of community issues and concerns and knew how to connect with community groups and resources.

At the same time, these patrons maintained a strong interest in improving their own performance for the benefit of the club and its activity, and they felt the need for continued support for themselves and their colleagues. They also recognized the critical need to motivate

students and were actively seeking ways of eliciting the best effort and participation from students.

The teachers in the rural area generally did not have the same level of experience as those in Choma. Many had previous experience as a member of a CC and were strongly committed to environmental conservation. However, they inevitably felt isolated and discouraged by the severe obstacles of poor resources and lack of support.

There was considerable variation in the support from other organizations solicited by club patrons. Some patrons and administrators described active links with very positive results. For example, some schools had made arrangements for transportation with local government departments so that their clubs could undertake field trips. In the rural areas, connections with the Department of Forests had resulted in contributions of seeds and seedlings for planting projects. Typically, the less experienced teachers had weaker community links.

### **Club Activities**

Again there was a marked difference between clubs in the town of Choma itself and those in the rural areas when it came to club activities. Rural schools focused almost entirely on projects such as tree planting, an activity which improved school yard aesthetics, developed individual skills and responsibility, and earned income for the club. The tree planting project reflects a connection with the Women's Conservation Clubs of the area; however, the fact that the scope of projects was essentially limited to this activity reflects the schools' limited access to transportation and resources centred in Choma. Club members were also involved in classroom activities such as drama and artwork, again within the scope of their material resources and the leadership capabilities and knowledge of the patrons.

Schools in Choma were involved in a greater variety of activities. In addition to the tree planting and drama activities which they had in common with rural schools, club activities included garbage pit and fish pond projects, as well as field trips and field studies. The club had undertaken major outings to wildlife areas at Livingstone, as well as overnight camping trips, while local field studies were combined with picnics to farm areas and the Choma Dam. The radio program was also more easily accessed in town, and it contributed ideas and topics for the club's classroom and field activities.

## **Desirable Club Activities**

**Most clubs indicated a strong desire to increase, or improve on, activities which were already underway. Some clubs saw the development of nurseries, for example, as an important way of expanding the tree-planting program. The development of fish ponds was also frequently identified as a desirable activity, although for many rural schools a poor or impractical water source would make such a project difficult. It was often noted that expert advice could be important in carrying out some of these more involved projects.**

**Field trips and linking with other clubs were also high priorities for new activities. Such links could be based on information exchange and/or competitions, along with social activities.**

## **Difficulties**

Lack of financial support and the difficulty of raising funds, particularly in the rural areas, seemed to be the dominant obstacle to club success. Financial difficulties affected everything from equipment and supplies available for field trip transportation and projects, to learning materials for the students. Rural schools identified the lack of learning materials as a particular concern. Only very small numbers of magazines have reached these schools, usually through the Department of Education Office, and there is a desperate need for more, in these schools which do not have libraries. Schools also identified audio/visual materials as a desirable resource, while realizing that without power it would be difficult to take advantage of such equipment.

Rural teachers identified strong feelings of isolation, and indicated the importance of not only teacher support, but also specific training which would give teachers the knowledge and techniques to establish and run a CC.

## **Community**

Community responses to the issues surrounding environmental conservation and the activities of the CC's were extremely varied. Some parents were highly knowledgeable and interested in the issues and their children's activities, while others were quite distant and less interested. In Choma, interested and knowledgeable parents tended to have a relatively broad view of environmental concerns, including the green house effect, industrial pollution, land degradation and water pollution. Parents in Choma reflected on past experience in rural areas and expressed concern for the place of agriculture in changing patterns of land use in the region. Land use, forestry and agriculture issues were prominent in the minds of parents in the rural areas, where the focus was on the immediate necessity of protecting land so that it would be productive for food and shelter. In general, the parents' views reflected the scope of the children's perspective.

There was support, in both urban and rural areas, for the children's Chongololo Club participation as an important experience which extended the child's knowledge of the environment, but the club was rarely characterized as priority activity.

## **3.3 Kitwe**

### **Contacts**

It was at the request of the WECSZ that Kitwe was added to the list of study areas. Mr. Kasula Chanda, the Environmental Education Coordinator with the WECSZ, was very helpful in establishing contact with the two schools which participated in the interview process.

Both schools had established CC's, and in each school the consultants held discussions with club members. In one school a number of staff members including the head teacher, the club patron, and assistant patrons also participated in an interview session. Two parents were interviewed in conjunction with one of the schools, and this modest link with the community was supplemented by contact with the Provincial Forestry Office, as well as the WECSZ itself.

### **Club Meetings**

Student membership in CC's exceeded the expected grade levels targeted by the WECSZ, with one club extending the age range to include students in Grs. 1- 3. Membership was open to all and total numbers of participants were large: 55 in one school and 135 in the other. The larger group, however, was operating in a school where the total student population was 1700, with students coming in shifts. The number of teachers involved in the program was similarly large. Conflicts with other clubs still had an impact on the numbers of students participating, as a full range of club activities was offered.

In this area there was a significant connection with the CCOA. In fact, radio and television were identified as important sources of information.

### **Students**

The students interviewed in this study area demonstrated a good understanding of environmental concerns at the local level. Their sense of the environment encompassed the neighbourhood, including plants, rocks, trees, houses and yards. The importance of the environment lay in the products it offered to people—products such as milk, meat, fruit, building materials and clothing.

Broader environmental systems and their interrelationships were not as well appreciated, although students understood links between certain environmental and social effects (e.g. the link between air pollution and disease), as well as local environmental issues (e.g. tailings, smog and litter). They were enthusiastic and interested in expanding their conservation knowledge and experience.

It was very difficult to gain any appreciation of the extent to which the club had created links to the family and community. The parent group interviewed expressed strong support for their children's participation and indicated that there was undeveloped potential for community links. The students, too, indicated a certain degree of openness with their parents about the club.

### **Patrons**

It is difficult to generalize about patrons in the Kitwe area, as only one extended interview was conducted. The patrons in this school were very knowledgeable and very keen to develop a strong and successful club. They were aware of the environmental problems of their area and recognized the economic forces behind many of those problems—industrial mine wastes, for

example, pollute the stream behind the school and affect the quality of the air.

The staff in this school seemed strongly committed to the program, generally motivated by personal experience with conservation clubs in secondary school and during their teacher training. Staff members interviewed suggested that while environmental science teachers are looked to naturally for leadership, in fact teachers from a variety of disciplines who are interested in the environment can offer strong leadership. Efforts are ongoing to educate fellow teachers regarding environmental concerns, and teachers involved with the club expressed a keen desire for workshops which would enable them to strengthen their program and benefit from the ideas of other groups.

These teachers also demonstrated a very good understanding of community interests and perspectives. Having experienced a lack of community support, which they relate to a lack of awareness, teachers have undertaken planting projects as a way of developing the CC profile.

### **Club Activities**

Classroom activities, including lessons and quizzes, were common in these schools, and nature study seemed to be the main focus determined, primarily, by the materials available. Teachers expressed significant concern regarding the relevance of the CC magazines to their own environment and local experience. While study of the natural environment was interesting, they felt that they needed resources which could help their students understand the environment in which they lived.

Local project activities such as fish farming and tree planting supplemented classroom activities and contributed to fundraising and schoolyard improvement efforts. The teachers reported one field trip, but further club travel was limited by a lack of funds.

### **Desirable Club Activities**

Field trips were identified as the most desirable new activity. Both students and staff wanted to travel to parks for wildlife viewing and to be able to appreciate aspects of the natural environment which were not locally accessible. Audio/visual programs and equipment were identified as ways of gaining similar experience.

There was also interest in expanding project activities. A stream rehabilitation project was suggested, and the development of nature trails was discussed. Others wanted to expand activities in the area of drama, dancing and poems, with the possibility of using these activities to build community awareness.

It was also suggested that twinning with other schools abroad would be an interesting and engaging way for students to gain an appreciation of other environments and of different ways of addressing environmental problems. One further suggestion put forward was to encourage participation and motivate students with various forms of individual recognition, such as uniforms, T-shirts, certificates or badges.

### **Difficulties**

Lack of financial support was identified as the dominant obstacle to club success, particularly as there were no resources for field trip transportation. Resources such as learning

materials were also lacking, as magazines arrived only erratically, and participants indicated that new materials relating to the environmental problems of their own area would be helpful.

## **Community**

A couple of explanations were offered concerning the apparent lack of communication between the club and the community. One explanation was that the club was relatively new in one of the schools and would become more widely known over time. Another observation was that the parents were typically uneducated, and that it was difficult in this context for the children to communicate the environmental message.

Participants perceived general lack of environmental awareness on the part of the community at large, and suggested that a significant population of transient mine workers with little apparent interest in, or concern for, the environment contributed to this perception. At the same time, they indicated that there was a segment of the community interested in environmental issues and simply needing help to mobilize. Participants suggested a number of avenues for community involvement, including involving existing community theatre groups as partners in CC presentations, and bringing club awareness presentations to school open houses and PTA meetings. It was even suggested that supportive community based clubs be formed in parallel to the CC.

## **3.4 Lusaka**

### **Contacts**

The consultants contacted five schools in Lusaka, all of which had established CC's. Patrons were interviewed in each of the schools, and in four of the five schools discussions with club members were held. Parents associated with each school were also interviewed.

Schools were selected with consideration for convenience and availability of contacts. Because other areas visited during the study were given higher priority on the basis of travel commitments, the timing of school visits in Lusaka was not ideal, as it coincided with the transition from one term to another. Nevertheless, teachers were cooperative in accommodating meetings. It was also more difficult to conduct interviews with parents in Lusaka as, unlike in many of the rural areas, it was necessary to make appointments to meet after working hours. Because of time constraints, only one parent was contacted for each school.

### **Club Meetings**

Student membership in CC's again varied from the expected grade levels targeted by the WECSZ, with two clubs extending the normal age range to include students from Grs. 1- 3. One club restricted its membership to only Gr. 7's, while another included Grs. 7 - 9 only. Within the grades identified, membership was open to all and the size of the groups was variable, the largest having about 30 members.

There was a strong connection with the CCOA. Most students listened at least periodically, and the patrons and one of the parents had also listened and were familiar with the program.

## **Students**

The students interviewed in this study area generally demonstrated an urban perspective on the environment. They tended to focus on pollution, but there was also recognition of deforestation issues and problems of water shortages. A broader sense of environmental relationships was not clearly articulated, although students identified some examples, such as the impact of deforestation on soil erosion. Factories figured prominently in the discussion of causes of environmental problems, as did the issue of litter disposal.

It was very difficult to gain an appreciation of the extent of club links with the family and community. Parents and children indicated openness and support for the program and the children's participation. However, larger community initiatives and impacts were not identified.

## **Patrons**

Patrons of the CC's in these schools appeared committed to the project. Some had been CC members themselves and felt good about their continued involvement. They identified a range of environmental issues but, like the students, focused their attention on problems such as garbage and water pollution which were relevant to the urban context in which they lived.

Patrons felt that not only an urban lifestyle, but also a lack of awareness, contributed to a lack of community interest and support, and they considered this an area which needed to be addressed.

## **Club Activities**

Classroom activities were common in these schools and included lessons, discussions, poems, plays, songs, dances, drama, poster making, puzzles and quizzes. Project activities included tree planting and gardening.

Nature study was also important to some groups and involved a combination of classroom study materials and field trips. Materials provided for the program were considered very helpful by some, but distribution is an issue even in Lusaka, and participants indicated the need for a broader and more comprehensive set of materials. Other club activities included picking up litter and taking part in environmental events.

## **Desirable Club Activities**

A variety of future activities were suggested. Field trips were a high priority, but were perceived as dependent on increased funding, as was the acquisition of more resource materials. Competitions were also suggested as an activity which would permit interaction with other clubs.

Other suggestions for future improvements included increasing the number of club patrons to provide adequate guidance and bringing in guest lecturers from partner organizations in environmental conservation.

## **Difficulties**

Lack of financial resources was the main obstacle to club success identified by the

participants. This lack was felt particularly in relation to transportation for outings and the acquisition of new learning materials. Magazines were received only erratically, and new materials relating to the environmental problems of urban centres were desired.

Patrons also recognized the need for training workshops which would help them to provide better leadership. The lack of connection with, and support from, other environmental organizations was identified as a difficulty.

## **Community**

Participants agreed that there was a lack of environmental awareness on the part of the community at large, and offered a number of suggestions for creating a better understanding. Public awareness campaigns, which could involve radio, television, pamphlets, drama, and even door to door canvassing, were suggested.



## **4. Strengths of the Program**

**In the analysis of the above data, the consultants identified a number of strengths characteristic of the Chongololo program. It is felt that with these characteristics at work, a successful environmental education program will have great potential to make a significant impact on a community's short and long term approaches to environmental issues.**

### **4.1 Profile**

The CC program has become an extremely well known name among elementary school clubs. It is so familiar that if schools do not have a Chongololo club, they feel they should have. In schools visited where there was no active club, they frequently had some recollection of club activity in the past—a teacher was remembered as having a particular environmental interest, or a grove of trees was identified as having been planted by a former club. In only one school did we need to explain the CC concept.

The movement of teachers throughout the educational system has had a positive impact on the club's profile. Teachers and administrators bring previous experience with successful clubs to new schools and encourage others to become involved. Many teachers we interviewed had been involved with clubs at previous schools, and this recurring pattern seems significant to the continued success of the program. Administrators, in many instances, were also very familiar with the program and, having been patrons at other schools in the past, encouraged and supported the program in their current posts. Administrators who are sympathetic to the program as a result of previous involvement can play a critical role in its ongoing success while, as was noted by some of the patrons interviewed, a lack of administrative support can be extremely detrimental.

### **4.2 Participants**

One of the strengths of the Chongololo program is the fact that it targets young children as its primary audience. This group is extremely important in the process of environmental education, because so many attitudes and lifestyle practices are formed at a very early age. Students' involvement in conservation activities in elementary school tends to lead to similar involvement in later schooling and indeed in their adult lives. The Chongololo program was a strong presence in the upper elementary school grades originally targeted (Grs. 4 - 7). Every club we visited included at least a portion of this age group, while many included a broader range of students. Typically, where older students attended the school, the club extended its membership into the higher grades (Gr. 8 & 9). In some cases, early elementary grades were included as well, particularly Grade 3. In a number of cases, students as young as Grade 1 were included, and in one school a "junior" club was created for the younger students. This wide-ranging program encouraged participation at an early age and developed a strong presence for the club in the school.

The elementary school years are also important because they provide the only opportunity to reach the many students who do not go on to further education. Girls, in particular, are poorly represented in the senior levels of education, and yet they represent a segment of the population which is extremely important in dealing with environmental issues at the community level. It was encouraging to see girls so strongly represented in the clubs which were studied. While in

many of the groups the boys tended to dominate the discussion, in others the girls obviously provided the leadership and initiative for the club. The consultants did not regularly record the ratio between the sexes in each club, as participation by girls had been a specific request when arranging meetings. However, considering the club size and the constitution of the group in each case, the percentage of members who were girls was estimated at about 35 - 40%.

Accessibility also affected the breadth of the CC participation. Generally speaking, the club was open to all students within the grade limitations identified. However, a small number of schools had identified a maximum number of participants. In only one instance did membership entail a fee, which may have been a deterrent to some. These restrictions were not intended in the original program, and generally schools embraced the policy of encouraging all interested students to participate.

Certain barriers to participation existed, however, which were not related to the policies of the program or the individual school. Often this was a matter of scheduling, as most schools had an identified a club time when all clubs met. Conflict with the activities of other clubs, as well as sports programs, influenced the membership of the CC. The other major factor limiting participation was the distance between home and school, which made it impossible for some students—particularly younger ones—to stay after classes for club activities.

In policy and practice, the CC program reflects an effort to reach a very broad group of students at a critical stage in their education and development. This aspect of the program is considered to be crucial to its success.

### **4.3 Lasting Impressions**

The Chongololo program has the capacity to attract students' attention to environmental issues at a critical stage of their development. Young children are impressionable and a strong positive experience can have a lasting effect on the attitudes and values they develop.

As well, the subject of wildlife, which formed the original base for the Chongololo program, is particularly appealing to children. Children are naturally fascinated by animals, and students interviewed repeatedly identified the desire to view, and learn about, wild animals as a reason for joining the club, or as a strongly desired activity. The CC has the opportunity to built on this anticipation and interest and to create significant and memorable experiences for club participants.

Patrons often reported that it was a CC event from their youth (e.g. a trip to a park) that sparked their interest and led to a continuing commitment to conservation. In other cases, a particular individual demonstrating a strong commitment to, and knowledge of, conservation served as a model for the student. These stories illustrate the potential impact of the Chongololo club experience, and the CC program in Zambia is strong today largely because of the present school and student leaders who have been motivated by these kinds of experiences.

### **4.4 Leadership**

The level of capability and commitment of leaders in the CC program is a result not only of formative childhood experiences, but also of training and opportunities later in their careers. Recognizing early on in the program the need for leadership training, the WECSZ had

established a support network offering teacher workshops and training events. The results of this early effort are still visible in the current program among the experienced teachers who provide continued leadership.

This aspect of the program has been severely curtailed since the mid 1980's, as a result of funding limitations. At the current time, efforts to support teachers are few and uncoordinated, generally limited to specific opportunities and supported by special funding sources. Still, even on an intermittent basis, such workshops and events are extremely important and are recognized by teachers as critical to their success with the clubs. In spite of funding limitations, these activities are encouraged by the national and branch levels of the WECSZ.

Some current, branch level initiatives offer important examples of initiatives to support teachers. In Kitwe, the WECSZ facilitates sessions in conservation education during teacher training programs. In Choma, workshops involving club patrons in the area have been held, and more are planned. The national office has also identified key leaders within the program and has, with help from other agencies, supported their training at environmental education centres outside the country. Clearly, there is an ongoing need for a support program for Chongololo leaders. The broadly applied teacher training element was a significant asset to the program and should be recognized as an integral part of its success.

## **4.5 Information**

Perhaps the greatest strength of the program is the information produced by the WECSZ for club use. The CC magazines were developed as a complete program to be used on a monthly basis over the span of a student's involvement with the club. Companion teaching materials were also developed and distributed with the magazines. Affiliated clubs were to receive materials based on the number of students registered in the club each year, following the payment of a nominal fee. The fee (1000K per club) was designed more to ensure that a club existed than to provide income for the national program.

The information produced by the WECSZ was pivotal to the success of the program in three ways. First, it was important because little else was available to the schools in the way of educational materials. Desperate as most schools were for any learning materials, a program such as the CC could be assured that their publications would be widely and thoroughly read, if they were successful in providing them in sufficient quantities to the schools. Indeed, one teacher explained that the magazines they received were valuable for their versatility, as they were used not only for the club, but also for science class and for reading comprehension in English classes.

Teachers reported that the materials were appropriate to the students' level and that the children appreciated them very much. Both the format and content were considered good, although several teachers suggested that some more detailed information would be helpful. In some cases teachers wanted to see additional topics covered which would be of particular relevance to the individual club. While recognizing the importance and appropriateness of what was provided, they wanted also to identify areas where expanding the scope of the information would be helpful to the clubs.

The third important feature of the educational materials was that they were consistent in schools across the country and helped to reinforce the national identity of the club, reflecting the

mandate and direction of the organization. Each club, through the standardized curriculum, could identify with other clubs throughout the country and feel themselves part of a larger system and community of students. Not only is this sense of belonging important, but such a framework also gives the conservation message a more authoritative voice than it would have through individual, independent clubs. Of course, the interest in broadening the material and bringing in locally relevant issues is a concern for the WECSZ in its need to clearly articulate its direction and vision. However, such interests need not diminish the strength of the basic messages that serve to identify nationally the conservation focus of the WECSZ and the CC's.

## **4.6 Complementarity**

As an additional source of information, the WECSZ also established the Chongololo Club Of the Air. Like the CC magazines, the radio initiative targeted an audience of students in senior elementary schools, and a full slate of programs was developed to address a wide variety of topics. The WECSZ has received a considerable amount of positive feedback on the programs, and perhaps the greatest indication of their success can be seen in the number of listeners, among them community members interviewed during the present review, who have accepted the invitation extended at the end of each program to join the CCOA. While recognizing the program's success, participants noted that broadcasting the program in local languages would be helpful to community people who did not understand English. Broadcasting in one local language is already being done, but lack of funds has limited development in this area.

There were two main lines of comment on the CCOA. First, the program is highly appreciated by those who listen. Some clubs reported using the topics and information presented on the program in their regular club meetings, and a few patrons indicated that students brought questions to school from what they had heard on the radio.

The second response, however, was that the program was not readily accessible, either because of poor reception or limited access to radios, and the majority of clubs contacted during the review did not listen to the program. There was a significant difference between students in urban areas and those in rural areas with respect to this issue. In areas where access to the program was difficult, many clubs wanted to be able to tape the programs and provide access to them for all students. It is apparent that the CCOA presents material effectively and complements the CC magazines as the basis for the school based club program. The challenge is to ensure that the programs are available as widely as possible for students to reap the maximum benefit.

## **4.7 Community Links**

Links established between Chongololo clubs and the communities are an important measure of success of the program, and were thus an important aspect of the review. Clubs linked with the communities in a variety of ways. Interview participants reported a number of activities which directly involved community members. Fundraising projects were one example, where the club members participated in the preparation of a product such as garden produce or tree seedlings and then sold the goods to raise funds for the club. Through this direct contact with the community, the club was able to inform people of some of the group's conservation activities and the uses to which funds would be put. Such community awareness is the foundation for all other forms of community contact.

Many groups identified drama as another significant form of community contact. In this way, students delivered a direct conservation message and educated the public about the principles underlying the group's activities. For a number of groups not currently engaged in a dramatic program, it was a high priority for future activities. In the course of the review, a number of students in various clubs presented dramatic sketches and poems as examples of their activity. One club in the Mfuwe area performed an excellent dramatic sketch which presented the experience of a CC member going home and finding that her parents did not appreciate the understanding she was gaining through the club. However, after a community meeting on environmental issues, the parents changed their attitudes towards wildlife and became strong supporters of wildlife conservation.

Community improvement projects were also identified as ways CC's connected with their communities. One school club had undertaken neighbourhood clean-up effort to address the problems of litter. Most clubs had not yet extended such efforts into the community at large, but were beginning with their own school community. Activities such as developing garbage pits and cleaning up litter in the school grounds was beginning to have a broader impact on community awareness.

Another important example of a club's impact on the community was the concrete task of planting trees. One school reported that this activity was extended beyond the schoolyard to students' homes: club members had planted trees at school and took seedlings home to plant as well. The above examples indicate a the variety of ways in which the clubs were creating awareness in the community and seeking to make a difference in the lives of people.

## **4.8 Tangible Contributions**

**Involvement in concrete expressions of conservation principles reinforces environmental education in an important way. Another of the program's strengths which was clear in the majority of the clubs studied was the involvement of members in making a tangible positive contribution to the environment around them. Most clubs demonstrated that they were making a difference either on the school grounds or in the community. Typical examples of these activities, as described above, included tree planting programs, garbage pits and litter campaigns, vegetable gardens, and fish ponds. While such activities can involve important links with the community, they are also indications of the individual success of the clubs. Students are able to put conservation values into practice and gain a sense of the impact they can have. Classroom learning becomes more real, and such group activities it can be a fun and memorable parts of the students' club experience.**

**Participation in concrete tasks establishes a model which reinforces the value of doing something about an issue, rather than simply talking about it. Club members consistently talked about wanting to influence the community so that people would take action for environmental improvement in response to identified problems. By participating in environmental stewardship activities themselves, the students gain first-hand appreciation of the commitment and energy that action requires. This experience will be very valuable as they later take their places as adult community members with increased responsibility for local environmental issues.**

**The club's concrete activities can also be a source of pride. Participating in a group that seeks to address environmental problems through constructive action is an excellent way for students to feel good about themselves and the work they are doing. The satisfaction which comes from involvement in group projects not only builds students' self-confidence and can lead to life-long participation in conservation activities.**

## **4.9 A Cooperative Approach**

**In reviewing the CC program it is important to maintain a realistic set of expectations. This is an environmental education initiative for children in the elementary school years. The objective of the program is to educate a new generation of Zambians in a way of thinking about the environment that will allow them to make a constructive difference. This is clearly a long term goal—children do not change the world on their own, but helping them to change their attitudes today will allow them to make an important difference in the future.**

**It is important to recognize that the most effective environmental education for young people does not address this group in isolation. Children are strongly affected by their society, and they will learn new attitudes more readily if they see that adults around them accept and support them as they change. Correspondingly, adults will change their attitudes more readily if they see that it has a positive effect on their children and their children's future. A measure of the success of the environmental education program, therefore, is whether it is stimulating an attitude of openness to change in the wider community. Are there other local initiatives working for conservation and change in the way resources are being managed? How are the efforts of the CC's and community organizations and initiatives coordinated and integrated, so that the effects of both will be more meaningful and widespread?**

**It was reassuring to see many of the clubs reviewed so closely connected to other**

organizations in the community. Such connections not only strengthened the club but also benefited the partner organization. A significant example is the relationship between tourism operators and schools in the Mfuwe area. The operators and the CC's share a common interest in environmental conservation. The operators can offer extensive knowledge and have the means to support club activities and initiatives. In return, the schools provide the operators with an important link to the community, which demonstrates their commitment to community development and is of interest to their clients. This relationship has been strongly developed in three of the schools visited, and it makes a significant difference to the success and attractiveness of the clubs. Another prime example of a direct community relationship is the interaction between CC's and Women's Conservation Clubs in the Choma area. The groups share common principles and support each other in projects and activities, forming an important link between the students at school and their parents in the community. Groups which share experience and common goals assist each other in maintaining efforts for change.

Significant links with the public arise from the very structure of the Chongololo program. In the first place, the program is the product of a non-profit, publicly based society, which means that the initiative has come from the people of Zambia and continues to be supported by them. From the development of materials and radio broadcasts, to the teachers in the classrooms, all aspects of the program are realized by volunteers giving of their time and energy to achieve goals in which they believe. In turn, these volunteers have sought out support from various organizations and corporations.

At the local level as well, clubs reach out to the public for support for their activities. Links with other community organizations or with government agencies have allowed the use of a Department of Agriculture vehicle for club outings, and have resulted in a contribution of seedlings from the Department of Forestry in the Choma area. Other benefits might include lessons by individuals knowledgeable about aspects of environmental conservation such as, for example, the visits of the LIRDPS scouts to clubs in the Mfuwe area. Most clubs were interested in the opportunity for expanding these links and considered it a high priority for improving the strength of the club's program.

These examples of cooperation indicate a healthy program. Where patrons feel comfortable and knowledgeable, they naturally extend themselves to take advantage of all available resources. When they are unsure or insecure, there is a tendency to focus inward. It should be the objective of a program to build the capacity of classroom leaders to a level where they feel comfortable extending the activities of the club into the community. The CC program is only one modest contribution to promoting greater environmental conservation awareness and action throughout the country, but it is extremely effective in conjunction with a variety of other organizations and initiatives involved in working for change.

# **Appendix 1: Opportunities for Program Strengthening**

## **1. WECSZ Support**

The Chongololo Club program was selected for this review because of its success for over twenty five years in developing and encouraging environmental conservation among the young people of Zambia. Inevitably, a review such as this will also discover areas of the program which warrant attention. Typically, in a program of this magnitude and with such widespread success, resources become an issue when the sponsor is a volunteer organization faced with increasingly difficult economic conditions. However, awareness of the specific needs, based on concerns identified by people working directly with the clubs, can help in establishing clear areas of priority in which the WECSZ could increase action on a national scale.

Discussed below are a number of areas identified by people directly involved in the program as matters of concern requiring action. These program participants had a clear understanding of the difficulty of accomplishing these goals due to the resources required. However, with a sincere interest in improving the program, they wanted to strengthen and expand the impact of the clubs in their area and truly felt that they couldn't accomplish this on their own. In many cases, what leaders needed most was the creative initiative or the moral support and encouragement to make the effort and take risks. In other cases there is a definite need for added resources before the program can move forward. In every case leaders showed a willingness to contribute their time and talents to achieve improved environmental conservation education.

The people contacted in this review were committed to the ideals of the Chongololo program and believed in its capacity to influence environmental thinking and practices in their communities. It is with this background of support and commitment in mind that the following opportunities for growth and strengthening within the program are identified.

### **1.1 Strengthen Leadership**

Nothing is more important than the quality and commitment of the people who are working with students and delivering the environmental message. These are the people who can bring the program to life and carry it on in spite of difficult times when resources are few and administration is stretched. They are also the public face of the program, and it is through them that communities, government and business will see the WECSZ. Thus, it is critical to the success of the program and to the credibility of the WECSZ that these individuals are as fully prepared and energized as possible.

In the past, the WECSZ sponsored workshops where club leaders could come together, not only to discuss the content of the program, but also to develop leadership and organizational skills. These support events have been curtailed due to lack of financial resources. They are desperately needed, however, and could produce a very large return for the program if they were reinstated.

Regional workshops are likely the most cost effective means of reaching the most teachers with limited resources. Groups should be kept to a workable size (perhaps 15) and could include both existing club leaders and those teachers interested in establishing clubs in their schools. Three main subject areas are recommended for discussion, based on the results of the program



review.

### **a.) Content/Information**

**For many teachers some general familiarization with the content of the CC program would be very valuable. This is especially true for teachers thinking of starting a club, and those with limited experience in the program. It is not essential to focus entirely on the CC program materials. The goal, rather, is to encourage the broader view of environmental conservation that the WECSZ wishes to promote.**

**The second important area of discussion in this category is club activities and management. These items are closely linked to content discussions because they are the means by which content is conveyed. In this discussion, contributions from existing clubs are extremely important. Teachers will be able to relate to the experiences of others working in their area who face the same kinds of circumstances and concerns that they do.**

### **b.) Networking**

A major objective of the workshops should be to develop links among the participating teachers in a given region. Awareness of the people involved and activities being undertaken in schools in the region helps to develop a network of support and provides opportunities for partnerships among club leaders. Such links also offer the possibility of developing a system of support where less experienced teachers could draw on the experience of others.

### **c.) Experiential Learning Techniques**

Another topic that warrants attention in leadership workshops is the development of teachers' capabilities with experiential learning techniques. The school system currently follows a traditional lecture/questioning style of instruction. The CC's provide an important opportunity for students to explore and learn about the environment around them in different ways. Both students and teachers identified the need to generate interest and enthusiasm for learning as part of the club activity. The teacher can play an important role in this by exploring new approaches to learning. This means moving out of the classroom and into a different mode where the natural explorations of the children can guide the learning process. This requires the teacher to adapt to new approaches to leadership, and these workshops can be critical in introducing, exploring and supporting the adoption of such techniques.

## **1.2 Materials**

A second major area in which the program could potentially be strengthened concerns the materials available to clubs. The existing materials are highly valued by the teachers and students, but most reported that access to these materials was difficult. The WECSZ also recognizes that the costs associated with production and distribution of the materials are now extending beyond the limits of the Society's resources. However, this is such an important aspect of the program that new mechanisms must be found to increase production and strengthen the distribution process. It will be necessary to develop new partnerships that can bring more resources to the program, as well as a new distribution procedure that will be more reliable and

cost efficient.

Comments on the program materials were generally positive. A number of people, however, expressed interest in expanding the present scope of materials, both in terms of subject areas and in terms of the level of detail. A review and revision of program materials would be timely and could stimulate, in conjunction with other support initiatives, a revitalization of club activities. In conjunction with this review, it might be wise to reconsider the target audience, given the wide range of ages currently involved in club activities.

A similar review and revision of complementary program materials (radio programs, posters, etc.) would be appropriate in conjunction with the review of the regular printed materials. In particular, making tapes of the radio programs available to clubs where students don't have easy access to the radio program would be a positive step. Students and teachers in the clubs visited also identified a desire for video materials on topics of interest. The WECSZ could undertake to review and gather materials in sufficient quantities to supply video programs to clubs on a loan basis. Another suggestion was that clubs have access to resources which would allow them to videotape activities and outings in their area, so that others could benefit from their experience. This could not only provide excellent opportunities within a school or district but could also feed into a network where clubs across the country could share their experiences with other clubs through an exchange of video tapes. The WECSZ is a logical clearing house for this kind of national exchange.

### **1.3 Links Among Clubs**

Promoting links among the CC's could enhance the club program in many ways. Connections with other groups could reduce the feeling of isolation that often develops in small clubs where there is little contact with other areas or other activities. Links can also provide incentives for members to participate and to take on, and achieve, more within the club. They tend to provide added encouragement for a long term commitment to environmental conservation because of the increased significance attached to various activities.

Individual clubs, regional groupings of clubs and the WECSZ nationally might consider some of the following suggestions for increasing efforts to establish broader links and collaborative events for CC members and teachers.

#### **a.) Regional/National Events**

Regional or national events could be organized which would bring together participants from clubs around the country. These events could be competitive in format or of a festival nature and could be hosted on a rotating basis by clubs in different regions. They could encourage as much participation from clubs as possible or function as rewards for selected students. Such events would provide an opportunity for the WECSZ to contact leadership in the CC program (both students and teachers) and there should be efforts to provide as much support and encouragement as possible to those attending these events.

#### **b.) Club Exchanges**

Utilizing the central office of the WECSZ as a coordinating base, a program could

be established to put clubs in touch with others throughout the country with interest in exchange trips. Resource people, logistical support from cooperating agencies and private sector interests would be very helpful in stimulating such activities among clubs.

### **c.) Links to Secondary Schools**

Efforts need to be made on a regional basis to create stronger links between the CC's and their counterparts at the secondary school level. Continuing the efforts made in elementary school with ongoing environmental conservation education is an important reinforcement of the early stage of learning. Regional events to bring clubs together should include opportunities to have secondary and elementary students interact. Valuable encouragement could be given to graduating elementary school students in the form of information about the related club at the secondary level, and the name of the sponsoring teacher. Secondary school teachers could likewise be informed of students graduating from the elementary level who have been involved with the CC, so that they can be individually encouraged to continue such involvement.

### **d.) Links to Teacher Training Schools**

Special mention is made here of teacher training schools because of the importance of familiarizing the broadest possible segment of the teacher population with the CC program and the need for environmental conservation education. The WECSZ has made some effort in that area in the past, and continues to do so in some regions of the country; however, there is much that can be done in this regard. Typically, the WECSZ has planned events or workshops for teacher trainees as part of their program. While these efforts are good, additional initiatives might be considered. For example, interested trainees could be included in regional workshops for club leaders; they could be invited to volunteer or participate at national or regional events; volunteers could come as assistants to regular club activities and programs; they could assist in the development of a roster of teachers nation-wide with interest and/or participation in environmental conservation, providing the WECSZ with an invaluable tool for contacting a key audience in support of the CC program.

## **1.4 Links to Communities**

Throughout the review, the consultants received many ideas and suggestions for ways to strengthen the links between the CC's and the communities of which they are a part. Many individuals and groups were keen to create new ways of supporting one another's interests, and they appreciated what the children in the CC program could contribute. A few very specific and noteworthy suggestions presented to the consultants are briefly described below.

### **a.) Parent Advisory/Participation Committees**

Many parents were interested in becoming more closely linked to the school program. Some suggested that parent advisory committees might be formed to assist the school in developing the program and providing related opportunities for the children. Some parents wanted to become more directly involved in the program, so as to take advantage themselves of the learning that was taking place. They suggested having the club meet in each of the surrounding villages in turn with the program open to adults.

Others suggested that open house days, events, or meetings could be organized in which the children would present their activities and learning (through drama, poetry, displays, etc.) to the whole community.

### **b.) Cooperative Projects**

Parents also suggested specific ways in which existing adult groups, with complementary objectives, could cooperate with the CC's. One suggestion was to participate in joint projects, where both groups could exchange ideas and work to achieve common goals. Joint events targeting community awareness were identified as another possibility.

### **c.) Agreements for Support**

In most communities there are agencies or private sector interests closely aligned with the CC program. While teachers are aware of many of these connections, they typically have neither the time, access, nor experience to develop the kinds of relationships with these groups that could significantly enhance their program. They need assistance in this regard. Sometimes school administrators have the inclination and opportunity to assist in this way, but often this opportunity goes untapped. Key people within the community who are supportive of the program, or regional or national representatives of the WECSZ, could lend important assistance in this area. Agreements could be reached to address a variety of needs, depending on the specific situation of the clubs in the area: e.g. transportation, seedlings, expertise for direct instruction or advice on projects, or financial support for club activities or trips.

### **d.) Regional/National Events: Sponsorship**

Support can also be developed at a regional and national level. It is possible that high profile competitive or festival events, bringing together students and teachers from different parts of the country, could obtain sponsorship from private sector interests. There is a definite opportunity to garner support from many companies who would be pleased to enhance their public profile by hosting CC events. Developing this sort of interest and creating the kinds of events that would attract sponsorship would require effort on the part of the WECSZ's national office. However, once the program was begun the benefits to the CC's and to the WECSZ could be significant.

## **1.5 Society Profile**

Over the course of the review, many suggestions were made regarding the profile CC program. For students and teachers, the profile of the club was important, and potential rewards to the school and to individuals were seen as a motivation for student participation. Some suggestions for increasing motivation through enhanced profile included individual student certificates, badges, uniforms, and T-shirts.

However, it is also important to consider the profile of the WECSZ as the coordinator and sponsor of the program. It is the consultant's view that this dimension is being largely overlooked, to the detriment of the Society. The CC enjoys widespread recognition, but there is little recognition of the role of the WECSZ in the program, or of the WECSZ itself. This is

unfortunate, because the organization needs support among the general public in order to maintain and strengthen programs like the CC's. The heightened profile of the WECSZ is also necessary among the present CC membership, so that they know that there is the opportunity for life-long association with this conservation organization. National and regional events, as discussed above, are one way of increasing the profile of the WECSZ. Maintaining a profile in the community through the recognition of active individuals (perhaps CC leaders in the school) is another way. Also, the design of materials for CC members and for general use should be used to increase the visibility of the Society.

## **2. External Support**

The WECSZ has a significant stake in the CC program and has a tremendous opportunity to make it pay greater dividends to the profile and sustainability of the organization. However, the Society is also in need of support in order to make such investments for long term benefits. In the short term, there are a number of key areas where external support could greatly assist the WECSZ at a time when its resources are stretched to the limit. This support would make a significant difference in the delivery of environmental conservation education in Zambia and would at the same time establish a support structure that could be maintained by the WECSZ.

The areas identified below have been discussed in this report previously both as areas of strength in the existing program and as areas of opportunity for increased growth. The program is clearly a valuable effort in environmental education and one that can continue to grow with the right support. The particular areas highlighted here are considered the most appropriate opportunities for agencies and interests beyond the WECSZ to become involved in short term assistance. There are three areas where such support is considered most valuable:

#### **a.) Community Partnerships/Links/Support**

**In developing partnership and financial support agreements, external organizations can offer a considerable depth of experience which has not been developed within the WECSZ. International connections, and the profile that external organizations could bring to such agreements would be valuable to the WECSZ. Sponsorships for national and regional events should also be a high priority since such profile can stimulate major undertakings and garner a high level of resource backing for the program. At the same time, partnerships need to be developed at the community level for the benefit of individual clubs.**

#### **b.) Leadership Development**

It is difficult to develop leadership in environmental conservation education when the level of expertise in the country is relatively low. Training, especially in the area of experiential learning as it applies to environmental education is a crucial element which could profitably be obtained from external sources. It will be important, however, to develop a program which builds the capacity, within Zambia, to sustain the ongoing task of training environmental educators, once a critical threshold of experience has been reached.

#### **c.) Material Development: Partnerships/Sponsorships**

The development and publishing of materials is an expensive and time consuming aspect of any program. Partnering with similar organizations locally and in other countries can allow for a more efficient use of resources in the production of materials. Cooperative ventures also attract greater interest on the part of potential sponsors, since the impact of the assistance is more widespread. External organizations could play a useful role in developing such partnerships and identifying the sponsors who could be associated with the production of environmental education materials.

## **Appendix 2: Additional Contacts**

During the course of the study, the consultants met with a host of individuals and groups who freely contributed their time, ideas and experiences. While it was not possible, logistically, to record the names of all those involved, this in no way diminishes these contributions to the study. Where possible, the names of school staff and parents have been included in the data tables of input (see Appendix 3). Listed below are the names of others whose interviews are not recorded in the tables, since they were external to the school based review.

The consulting team offers sincere thanks to all participants, named and unnamed.

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